

ecoNews — Wire —

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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For immediate release

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GOVERNOR'S ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS HONORS IOWA LEADERS

DES MOINES — Fifteen Iowa organizations and businesses will receive environmental excellence awards from Gov. Tom Vilsack at a ceremony Feb. 16 in Des Moines. The recognition is part of a program honoring Iowans for their leadership and innovation in protecting Iowa's natural resources.

"I congratulate these Iowans for their outstanding work to protect and enhance our environment," Vilsack said. "Their efforts serve as a model in providing clean air, water and land for all Iowans."

The awards program recognizes comprehensive environmental programs by organizations and businesses, along with special project awards in water quality, air quality, waste management, habitat restoration/development, and energy efficiency/renewable energy. The winners were chosen from nearly 70 nominations and include:

Environmental Excellence Award:

Alcoa, Bettendorf

West Des Moines Community School District, West Des Moines

City of Coralville, Coralville

Timberhill Winery, Sibylla and William Brown, Leon

Special Recognition in Energy Efficiency/Renewable Energy:

University of Iowa Main Power Plant, Iowa City

MidAmerican Energy Company, Davenport

Monsanto Company, Muscatine

Special Recognition in Waste Management:

West Des Moines Community School District, West Des Moines
Midwest Computer Brokers, Inc., Walford
Habitat ReStore, Habitat for Humanity – Quad Cities, Davenport

Special Recognition in Water Quality:

Sioux County Soil & Water Conservation District, Orange City
South O'Brien FFA, Paullina
Dr. James Baker/ISU Ag & Biosystems Engineering, Ames

Special Recognition in Air Quality:

University of Iowa Main Power Plant, Iowa City
Monsanto Company, Muscatine
Bus Emissions Education Program, Clive

Special Recognition in Habitat Restoration/Development:

CAM Middle School, Massena
Timberhill Winery, Sibylla and William Brown, Leon
Matt McQuillen/Twin Rivers Pheasants Forever Chapter, Anamosa

Complete details about each award winner and the awards program are available at www.iowadnr.com.

The ceremony will take place at the Wallace State Office Building in Des Moines Feb. 16 at 2 p.m. The awards are sponsored by the Governor's Office, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, the Department of Economic Development, the Department of Education, the Department of Public Health and the Iowa Waste Reduction Center.

For more information, contact Jill Cornell at (515) 281-0879 or at Jill.Cornell@dnr.state.ia.us.

Note to editors: Media are invited to attend awards ceremony.

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EPC TO DECIDE ON WATER QUALITY STANDARDS AND CONSIDER LAND RECYCLING PROGRAM

DES MOINES – Commissioners will consider rulemaking on water quality issues at the Feb. 16 meeting of the Environmental Protection Commission, after tabling action on the same issues in January.

The Environmental Protection Commission will be asked to add numeric criteria for chloride to Iowa's water quality standards. Commissioners will also be presented with a

draft procedure to designate streams as cold water. Proposed rules allowing the DNR to use the procedure will be introduced in March.

Proposed changes in the water quality rules would set surface water criteria for chloride, and change total dissolved solids standards to allow site specific approaches. Another rule proposal would change some lake and stream classifications, and add about 300 public lakes to the designated list of lakes and wetlands. It would also protect fishable streams for secondary contact recreational uses.

In other action, commissioners will consider rule changes to the land recycling program addressing cleanup of contaminated properties. Proposed rule changes deal with concerns of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, allowing a memorandum of agreement between the DNR and the federal agency. With that agreement in place, the federal agency would agree not to take action at sites that have successfully completed the land recycling program.

The EPC will meet on Monday, at 10 a.m., at the DNR office, 7900 Hickman Road in Urbandale. Public participation is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. The meeting is open to the public.

The complete agenda follows:

- Approval of Minutes
- Director's Remarks
- Air Dispersion Monitoring Presentation
- MOA Regarding Communication Upgrade to Fiber for Air Quality Bureau
- 112r Risk Management Plan Contract
- Final Rule - Chapter 23, Emission Standards for Contaminants (Commercial and Industrial Solid Waste Incineration Units that Commenced Construction On or Before November 30, 1999)
- Solid Waste Alternatives Program - US Green Fiber
- Notice of Intended Action - Amend IAC Chapter 567-11, Tax Certification of Pollution Control or Recycling Property
- Proposed Rule - Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 118, Discarded Appliance Demanufacturing
- Proposed Rule - Amend IAC Chapter 567-137, Iowa Land Recycling Program and Response Action Standards
- Proposed Rule - Chapter 61, Water Quality Standards
- Final Rule: Chapter 61, Water Quality Standards; Chapter 62, Effluent and Pretreatment Standards: Other Effluent Limitations or Prohibitions
- Notice of Intended Action - Chapter 49, Nonpublic Water Supply Wells; and Chapter 82, Well Contractor Certification
- Referrals to the Attorney General
 - a) Louisa Regional Solid Waste Agency - solid waste/penalty
 - b) Lawrence Handlos (Audubon County) - animal feeding operation
- Monthly Reports

- General Discussion
- Items for Next Months Meeting

More information about the agenda items can be found on the DNR website under Commissions and Boards at www.iowadnr.com.

The members of the commission are Kathryn Murphy, Chair, LeMars; Terrance Townsend, Newton; Lisa Davis-Cook, West Des Moines; Darrell Hanson, Manchester; Lori Glanzman, Mt. Pleasant; Jerry Peckum, Jefferson; Heidi Vittetoe, Washington; Francis Thicke, Fairfield; and Donna Buell, Spirit Lake. The director of the DNR is Jeff Vonk.

For more information, contact Karen Grimes, at (515) 281-5135.

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PUBLIC MEETINGS SET FOR RURAL HYDROGEN SULFIDE AIR QUALITY STANDARDS

DES MOINES — Public comment meetings around the state will begin February 17 and run through March 11 to gather input on proposed rules to establish health standards for hydrogen sulfide gas near large animal feeding operations.

The DNR is proposing a health standard for hydrogen sulfide gas in the air at rural homes and other public building that meet the legislative definition of separated locations to protect Iowans living near large concentrated animal feeding operations.

The standard would be used in evaluating monitoring data to determine if hydrogen sulfide levels pose health risks to citizens.

"The Legislature asked the DNR to study rural air quality near large concentrated animal feeding operations and we are responding. We have monitored hydrogen sulfide since April of 2002, but haven't had a health standard approved to compare the data to. We need an agreed upon health standard to measure against that data," said Wayne Gieselman, head of the DNR's environmental programs.

He said the monitoring study is not looking at small or medium farms, but measuring hydrogen sulfide at homes near some of the largest animal feeding operations in Iowa.

The DNR is proposing a health standard of 15 parts per billion that could not be exceeded more than seven times a year measured at those homes, churches, schools and other public facilities that meet the definition of a separated location, as required by the legislature.

The health standard would help gauge the quality of rural air, but does not restrict farm emissions. As required by law, should the health values be exceeded, then programs and plans to reduce emissions would be enacted after December 1, 2004.

If approved, Iowa would be the 28th state to adopt hydrogen sulfide standards. The Iowa proposal is neither the most stringent or most lenient and is based on university recommendations.

"The bottom line is we need to be able to protect rural Iowans from breathing unhealthy levels of hydrogen sulfide gas. We have monitoring data, but need a standard, then if concerns are found, we can work with agricultural researchers to explore cost-effective measures to ensure clean air," said Gieselman.

Five public hearings will be held. The dates, locations and times are:

February 17, 2004 at 7 P.M. at Iowa Lakes Community College's Gateway North Center, located at 1900 North Grand Avenue in Spencer, Iowa.

February 25, 2004 at 7 P.M. at Iowa Western Community College, located at 906 Sunnyside Lane in Atlantic, Iowa.

March 3, 2004 at 6 P.M. at the Mason City Public Library, located at 225 2nd Street SE in Mason City, Iowa.

March 8, 2004 at 6:30 P.M. at the Davenport Public Library, located at 321 Main Street in Davenport, Iowa.

March 11, 2004 at 7 P.M. at the Urbandale Public Library, located at 3520 86th Street in Urbandale, Iowa.

A fact sheet detailing the proposed health standards can be found at www.iowacleanair.com.

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing during the public hearings. All comments must be received no later than April 8, 2004. Any person who intends to attend a public hearing and has special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility, should contact Bryan Bunton at (515) 281-6729 to advise of any specific needs.

Written comments on the proposed rules should be directed to Bryan Bunton, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Air Quality Bureau, 7900 Hickman Road, Suite 1, Urbandale, IA 50322, Fax (515) 242-5094, or by electronic mail to bryan.bunton@dnr.state.ia.us.